

# The Builder.

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Monday last the members of the British Archaeological Association mustered very strongly in the ancient city of Worcester, the *Wigra-Cestre* of the Saxons, and were received by the corporation with the greatest consideration. Cromwell made Worcester historical land, and the cathedral has many points of great interest, but with these exceptions the city offers few objects for examination or matters for investigation, so that it may be subject for inquiry to some on what grounds, excepting the kindly offers of co-operation on the part of the authorities, the association selected it so early as a place of meeting. The successful issue of the congress, however, serves to shew that the determination was right, and so stops all cavil.

The old churches have been, for the most part, pulled down and rebuilt, and those few portions of the original buildings which remain have been so sadly disfigured, or are otherwise in so bad a state, as to offer little for the consideration of the architectural antiquary. They were mostly constructed of the treacherous red sandstone, one of the worst of the stones used for building purposes by the mediæval architects, and gradually fell to pieces. Desire to assimilate in colour, when parts of the old work remain, is the only excuse which can be made for those who restore buildings with the same unsound material.

The only ancient church remaining in Worcester which has picturesque features, or may serve to suggest an arrangement, is that of St. John, Bedwardine, which lies on the other side of the Severn, a little out of the city. Of this we give an engraving in our present number.\* It has the peculiarity of exhibiting no less than eleven gables, and has a very broad square tower of the late Perpendicular period, with pinnacled battlements, pinnacles at the four angles, and a fifth pinnacle from the apex of the roof which covers it. The south porch seen in the view was added about eight years ago, when various alterations were made inside. The church is an early foundation: some Norman columns and arches remain on the north side of the nave, but the latter have been cut away and altered into pointed arches, to enable the occupiers of the gallery formed in the low aisle to see into the body of the church.†

Near St. John's is a melancholy specimen of a compe Norman church, called St. Clement's, put up in 1523.

The view of the town from the bridge which you cross to reach St. John's, is very good, and the cathedral, placed on elevated ground, sloping down to the river, tells well,—the mutilations to which it has been subjected, the variety in the styles, and the stone used, not being observable. The high tapering spire of St. Andrew's, built in 1814, also aids the effect here, although we cannot say much for it when looked at nearer. According to "Deighton's Guide to the City," the tower of St. Andrew's,

is 90 feet high, "and spire 55 feet 6 inches: it is 20 feet in diameter at the base, and 6½ inches at the top."

We did not observe any new buildings in progress, with the exception of two Corn Exchanges. We said last week there was a run upon Corn Exchanges just now, and here we have a fresh illustration of the fact. One of them, which is in Broad-street, has a recessed porch, with four attenuated Doric columns within it, two on each side of the doorway, without *entasis*, the absence of which, with their disproportioned height, gives them a miserably pinched-in appearance. The columns carry a hybrid entablature and attic surmounted by a real plough, with compe sheaves of corn on the face of dies in the attic. Ranging with the attic on each side is a balustrade. It would be unfair, perhaps, to deduce an opinion on the state of architectural knowledge in Worcester from this one curious specimen of the art. The second Exchange (in the corn market), is not sufficiently advanced to justify comment, further than saying this is perhaps fortunate for the architect.

At the opening meeting in the Guildhall, on Monday evening, the mayor, in robes of office, introduced the president, Lord Albert Conyngham, with expressions of the pleasure afforded to the city by the visit. The president, who, with his nice lady, has exerted himself greatly to ensure the success of the meeting, said, in the course of his address,—

"The study of antiquities has engaged the attention of mankind from the earliest period of history. With the scientific or literary inquirer, the 'Past' must always have excited the warmest attention; the universal tendency of the imagination when cultivated and refined being to invest with importance every relic drifted down from an ancient world;—thus we find it recorded in the history of the fine arts, that the first rudimental attempts of sculpture, blocks of wood or stone, hewn into the rudest likeness of the human form, were preserved in the Grecian cities with the utmost consideration; but we find that not only a general love for the monuments and arts of the past existed at a very early period, but that there existed regular professed antiquaries,—there was a profession of men instituted in the principal Greek cities, whose business it was to point out to all inquirers the peculiar wonders of their locality, to explain ancient inscriptions, and to exhibit relics. Herodotus, who breathed the genuine spirit of antiquity, and who effected with grace and ease in narrative the difficult and delicate transition from the Mythic to the Historical, is full of allusions to the relics of the past. In Egypt, from the days of Menes or the Shepherd Kings, the love of antiquities was cultivated with a species of veneration bordering upon idolatry, and Plato informs us that to such an extent did this love of the past proceed, that both Egyptian sculptors and painters were by law forbidden to change or modify in any respect the forms of the ancient statues and paintings,—nay, that in his day there were works in the temples ten thousand years old. The same feeling was predominant in ancient Rome, and, there can be no doubt, that at an early period Antiquarian Societies in some form or other were constituted, though under the empire the reigning monarch watched every association with a jealous eye. Of the formation of Antiquarian Societies we have no certain data previous to the sixteenth century; that many existed earlier, especially among the ecclesiastics of the day, there can be little doubt, although the superstitious veneration of the supposed relics of saints must have been injurious in a high degree to the preservation of whatever was really curious or valuable. We first read of an antiquarian society being founded by Archbishop Parker, in the year 1570; about twenty of the members were accustomed to assemble from time to time in the house of Sir Robert Cotton:—in 1599 the society petitioned Queen

Elizabeth for a building and a charter, but with what success we know not; the reputation of the society, however, gradually increased until it excited the fears of James I., who, alarmed lest it should discuss public transactions, dissolved it. At the commencement of the eighteenth century it again revived and grew into such importance, that in 1751 the members obtained a charter of incorporation, the power to constitute statutes, and to act under a common seal. The original object of their inquiries appears to have been British antiquities and history, although the enlarged operations of the society now embrace every subject of ancient and mediæval relics and traditions. From the cultivation and extension of this antiquarian taste has sprung our modern institutions of similar tendencies. Of these, the Archaeological Association may boast of the widest range and the loftiest objects. Its peculiar constitution, its open meetings, its utter rejection of any spirit of exclusion, the zeal and promptitude with which at all times its members are ready to assist every inquiry, and to aid, as far as lies in their power, the prosecution of every landable design for the discovery and preservation of the relics of mediæval or ancient times,—cannot fail to render it one of the most useful societies of the present age. Its annual congress, whilst offering variety and amusement, cannot fail to increase and enlarge the field of its utility, by bringing various minds into contact, and by associating together persons of intelligence, who might otherwise have never met. It will then, upon the return of the members to their own localities, spread a love of whatever is curious or interesting that has been preserved to us from the ravages of time. The historian is deeply indebted to the antiquary, and to those most curious and interesting analogies by which genius and research frequently throw new lights upon the characters and motives of the distinguished actors of the past. The beautiful architectural remains, the exquisite specimens of the Cameo and Intaglio, the artistic skill displayed in the cutting of gems, the graceful designs and formal beauty of some of the antique pottery, the sharpness of outline, correctness of drawing, and, above all, the beautiful imagery upon the reverses of coins, which have descended to our times, can only be thoroughly appreciated and valued by those whose taste has been refined, and understanding cultivated, by antiquarian research. Of the encaustic paintings of the ancients we know little; their mosaics, however, have survived, and many specimens, after the lapse of twenty centuries, remain as fresh and fair as when they were first laid down. It is indeed delightful to wander back to that mysterious past, and to retrace the way to those lands of song and art, by the vestiges of such beautiful relics as these, until we can appreciate the feelings of him who said: 'There could be no more divine pleasure on earth to the man of genius and cultivated understanding, than to hear the dramas of Sophocles recited by the side of the Apollo or the Laocoon.' It has been prettily said in the preface to 'Brandt's Popular Antiquaries,'—'Rugged and narrow as this walk of study may appear to many, yet, fancy opens from hence to prospects enriched with the choicest views of her magic creation; but whilst pleased with this conceit, we must remember that 'truth,' as Dr. Johnson tells us, 'is the intellectual gold which nothing can destroy.' Yet truth like gold may exist in alloy, in combination with foreign substances; and as it is the office of the chemist to separate and refine the ore, so it is the province of the archaeologist to investigate and restore the other to its natural purity and beauty, free from all imperfections, uncorrupted by any alloy."

After a letter from Mr. Leisam, the high-sheriff, had been read, and some brief observations offered on the principal objects exhibited in the temporary museum of the association, Mr. Farholt, F.S.A., read a paper "On early Monumental Effigies previous to the time of King John, as illustrative of that Monarch's in Worcester Cathedral," which we give in full elsewhere.

Mr. Roach Smith remarked, at the close of the paper, that no wonder could be expressed

\* See p. 462.

† Bishop Lynn, on the 17th of February, 1871, ordered that the church of Wyke should be taken down, and that this church of St. John, in Bedwardine, fill then a chapel of ease to Wyke, should for the future be the parochial church.